SOIL CONSERVATION SERVICE NEWS

REGION 4

Comprising States of Louisiana, Arkansas, Oklahoma and Texas, except High Plains Area

REGIONAL OFFICE--FORT WORTH, TEXAS

VOL. V SEPTEMBER 1939 No. 9

COOPERATIVE WILDLIFE CONSERVATION PROJECT STARTED AT TEMPLE

Work of obtaining a census of the quail population on the 42,000 acre North Elm Creek watershed in Falls, Milam and Bell counties, Texas, will be started in the near future in connection with the operation of a cooperative wildlife conservation and quail restoration project being conducted by the Texas Game, Fish and Oyster Commission and the Soil Conservation Service.

Late last month officials of the Game Commission and the Soil Conservation Service entered into a cooperative agreement setting up this project. The term of the agreement is three to five years.

Operations work on 240 farms covering a solid block of 42,000 acres in the North Elm watershed will include the establishment of fenced-off wildlife areas ranging in size from one-forth to five acres in size where food, cover and water for birds will be provided; the planting of suitable food and cover plants along fence rows and the use of food and cover plants in the stabilization of gullies.

The new project which has the whole-hearted support of conservation farmers in the area is designed to demonstrate that the adoption of sound farming practices, and the use of vegetation to control erosion will also automatically aid in the restoration of quail and other forms of wildlife.

Officials of the Game Commission and Service biologists estimate that the wide-spread establishment of vegetation suitable for food and cover will result in the restoration of quail to a ratio of about one bird for each six acres on the 42,000-acre area. An accurate quail census, made prior to the beginning of operations, will provide a basis for an accurate check of the success of the project when comparative counts are made at later dates.

Under the terms of the cooperative agreement the Game Commission will furnish a biologist to make surveys and conduct census counts; draft management plans for specific farms; furnish signs calling attention to quail management areas; make recommendations for the annual quail harvest based on census figures; advise individual farmers relative to the management of their wildlife areas and assist in conducting educational programs.

The Soil Conservation Service will furnish labor, when available, for census work and to make plantings for erosion control and habitat improvement; furnish available materials for erosion control and wildlife plantings; furnish certain maps needed for planning farms for wildlife conservation; assist with the educational program and assist with planning to insure that all plans conform to the land use program approved by the Service.

It is estimated that from one to 10 of the fenced-off wildlife preserves will be established on each farm, depending on the size of the farm unit and the owner's conservation and restoration.

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BIOLOGISTS INSPECT TEMPLE PROJECT AREA

Ernest G. Holt, Washington, D. C., Chief of the Biology Division, Soil Conservation Service and Alsa Leopold of the University of Wisconsin, outstanding national authority in the field of wildlife management spent the day of September 21 on the Temple project where they observed the area to be included in the cooperative wildlife conservation and quail restoration project to be conducted jointly by the Texas Fish Game and Oyster Commission and the Soil Conservation Service. They were accompanied by Homer G. Towns, regional biologist. Messrs. Holt and Leopold are now making a tour of SCS regions throughout the nation so that Mr. Leopold may observe work the Service is doing in relating wildlife management to the complete erosion control program. Mr. Leopold will later collaborate with Service technicians in the preparation of literature dealing with the place of wildlife management in a coordinated erosion control program.

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PROGRESS OF OKLAHOMA DISTRICTS IS RAPID

A total of 159,446 acres of Oklahoma farm land was under agreement with 15 soil conservation districts Sept. 1, according to a compilation made by Leo S. Wertman, state coordinator for the Soil Conservation Service in Oklahoma. The acreage was represented by 895 agreements.

On the first of this month, the supervisors of these districts had received applications from 2,998 farmers who asked for assistance in the installation of soil and water conservation measures on their lands.

Farm plans were being prepared on 47,448 acres in 270 farms. In addition, 35 plans, covering 4,570 acres, had been completed but had not been signed by the owners.

Four Oklahoma soil conservation districts, which had completed organization and which had entered into memoranda of understanding with the U. S. Department of Agriculture, had not begun entering into agreements with landowners.

Conservation surveys had been completed on 1,494,884 acres in the Oklahoma districts on the first of this month.

The state coordinator's compilation also showed that 33 educational meetings, with a total attendance of 1,250 persons, were held in the districts in August. In addition, 23 meetings, attended by 587 farmers, were held.

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DISTRICTS IN U. S. COVER MORE THAN 100,000,000 ACRES

The most recent report on soil conservation district organization showed that 179 districts covering 104,650,016 acres in 25 states had been formed.

Of this total, 130 districts in 23 states had entered into memoranda of understanding with the Department of Agriculture whereby personnel of the Soil Conservation Service are assisting farmers within the districts to establish soil and moisture conservation practices.

Thirty-six states have enacted a law enabling landowners to organize soil conservation districts.

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CONSERVATION PRACTICES BRING UP OKLAHOMA WHEAT YIELDS

The planting of Austrian Winter Peas, a legume, to serve the dual purpose of protecting the land from heavy winter and spring rains and for soil improvement, plus the use of the conservation practices of terracing and contour cultivation this year made it possible for August Simmering, who farms near Garber, Oklahoma to produce an average of 34 bushels of wheat to the acre on eight acres of thin hillside land.

"The production of 34 bushels of wheat per acre is unusual, even on good land," Mr. Simmering said, "but it is a remarkable yield from poor land."

Mr. Simmering adopted an erosion control and soil and water conservation program for his farm in 1935, being assisted in establishing the various practices by Soil Conservation Service technicians and CCC enrollees from the Garber Camp.

The use of winter cover and soil improving crops was decided on as one phase of the conservation system. To get this part of the program underway Mr. Simmering planted a three-acre seed plot to Austrian Winter Peas in the fall of 1936. Using the seed harvested from this plot Mr. Simmering, in the 1937 fall, planted the eight acres of low producing hillside land in Austrian peas. This crop was plowed under green in May, 1938, for soil improvement and was seeded to wheat the following fall. The 1939 yield was 34 bushels of wheat per acre.

Mr. Simmering attributes this increase to the fact that the cover crop kept the soil from washing during winter and spring rains, that it added nitrogen to the soil while growing and added both nitrogen and organic matter to the soil when the crop was plowed under for green manure. Planting on the contour and the construction of terraces held rainfall on the land, permitting more water to soak into the soil where it was stored for future use of growing crops.

The effectiveness of conservation practices was also at strikingly illustrated by a comparison of wheat yields from the eight acre tract with those from an adjoining rented field on which no conservation practices were used. The yield from the rented field was 21 bushels to the acre, 13 bushels less than the per acre yield from the conservation treated field. Both fields are similar in soil type and slope--the principal difference being the use of conservation practices on one and the use of none on the other.

Another advantage of planting winter cover crops lies in the production of seed, Mr. Simmering has discovered.

In the fall of 1938, Mr. Simmering planted an additional 15 acres of land to Austrian Winter Peas. The crop on 12 of these 15 acres was plowed under for soil improvement and seed was harvested from the remaining three acres. Fifty bushels of seed were harvested from the three acres. The seed will be sold for five cents a pound.

The original three-acre seed plot has furnished all seed needed to plant additional acres to this crop.

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ARKANSAS FARMERS PUT IDLE LAND TO WORK

Hundreds of Arkansas farmers whose lands are located in the Soil Conservation Service project and camp demonstration areas or in the 14 state soil conservation districts are finding profitable uses for idle land through the establishment of hay producing meadows which, in addition to providing much needed hay crops, also control erosion and provide safe outletting places for terrace drainage water.

One of these farmers, Horace L. Jennings, who farms 40 acres southeast of Monticello on the Old Hamburg Road, reported recently that less than an acre of land, converted from idleness to meadow, this year produced two tons of first class Bermuda grass and lespedeza hay from a single cutting. A second cutting was not made since Mr. Jennings wants the lespedeza to reseed itself.

The meadow development was started in 1938 when Mr. Jennings asked technicians and enrollees of the Monticello Soil Conservation Service CCC camp to assist him with the installation of a complete erosion control program.

During the late summer of 1938 the proposed meadow site along an intermittent stream through a cultivated field was cleared of brush and sprouts, and the banks were plow-sloped and sodded with Bermuda grass. Kobe Lespedeza seed was planted in February 1939. The hay cutting was made in August of this year.

The conservation program on the Jennings farm includes the use of contour tillage, crop rotations, strip crops and terraces on 23 acres of cultivated land and the development of 17 acres of new permanent pasture, sodded and overseeded with common lespedeza.

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ARKANSAS NOW HAS 16 SOIL CONSERVATION DISTRICTS

The organization of two new soil conservation districts in Arkansas has increased the number of districts to 16 and the total acreage to 6,748,020.

The new districts are King's River-long Creek, containing 350,000 acres in parts of Boone and Carroll Counties, and Moorefield, covering about 300,000 areas in parts of Independence, Lawrence and Sharp Counties.

On the first of September, according to a report compiled by Glenn E. Riddell, state coordinator for the Soil Conservation Service in Arkansas, conservation surveys had been completed on 1,997,471 acres in the operating districts.

At that time the districts had received 4,762 applications for assistance and had entered into 2,310 agreements with farmers controlling 310,988 acres. A total of 120 farm plans, for 15,176 acres, had been completed and presented to the farmers for signature. In addition, 137 farm plans, covering 24,497 acres, were being prepared.

The state coordinator reported 83 educational meetings held during August drew a total attendance of 4,399 persons. Twenty-eight meetings to discuss planning and program execution also were held.

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DR. BENNETT TO SPEAK ON FARM AND HOME HOUR SEPTEMBER 29

Dr. Hugh H. Bennett, Chief of the Service, will speak on the National Farm and Home Hour radio program, September 29, beginning at 12:45 P.M. Central Standard Time. Dr. Bennett's talk was originally scheduled for Sept. 19 but an unscheduled European broadcast displaced the Farm and Home Hour. Dr. Bennett's topic will be: "Soil Conservation Progress in the Great Plains."

CONSERVATION PRACTICES TUILIZE WATER ON TEXAS FARM

The establishment of a conservation farming system on cultivated and pasture land of the W. H. Westbrook farm east of the Grape Creek School near San Angelo, Texas has made it possible for him profitably to utilize water which formerly flowed across his land inflicting heavy damage during each rain, Mr. Westbrook said recently.

"I feel sure that the water now held on my cultivated land by level terraces has increased my crop yields at least 15 percent a nd that the extra water held on the pastures by ridges has increased the growth of grass materially thereby increasing the livestock carrying capacity of my grazing land," he declared.

Run-off water from 500 acres of untreated land lying higher on the watershed above Mr. Westbrook's 320-acre farm formerly flowed across the Westbrook land, washing off valuable top-soil and damaging yound crops.

With the assistance of Soil Conservation Service technicians assigned to the San Angelo project, Mr. Westbrook built water spreading crescent ridges on 65 acres of pasture to hold the speed of incoming rainfall run-off and to spread this water over the entire pasture. Water which is not held on the pasture is conveyed by diversion terraces to two cultivated fields, on which terraces have been constructed. The level terraces on the cultivated fields are constructed with one and open so that as each is filled to capacity, the water flows around the end and is caught by the next terrace down the slope.

The effectiveness of this system was strikingly illustrated during a two-inch rain which fell in a single hour last month. Water ran onto the Westbrook farm four to six inches deep and approximately 1/8 mile wide. Water stood four to six inches deep on 100 acres of pasture land and all of the terraces on 153 acres of cultivated land were filled to capacity with the exception of the last terrace on the bottom of the slope. The fact that the lowest terraces were not filled showed conclusively that the water was held by the upper terraces.

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551 DISTRICT AGREEMENTS SIGNED IN LOUISIANA

The signing of 220 agreements between farmers and the eight operating Louisiana soil conservation districts during August increased the total number of district agreements to 551, Guy Fletcher, state coordinator in Louisiana for the Soil Conservation Service Announced. The 551 agreements cover 112,195 acres.

The districts have received a total of 1,993 requests from farmers who control 482,608 acres. A total of 168 farms, containing 32,949 acres, were being planned Sept. 1.

Conservation surveys had been completed the first of this month on 218,870 acres.

Fifty educational meetings, which drew a total attendance of 1,795 persons, were conducted during August.

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TIME OF TEXAS RADIO PROGRAM CHANGED

"United States Government Reports," the weekly radio program which during the past year has been heard over the facilities of the Texas State Network each Tuesday will hereafter be broadcast each Thursday, beginning September 28. Time for the program is 3:15 to 3:30 P.M.

The program is sponsored by the Office of Government Reports (formerly the National Emergency Council.) Each week the Texas state director interviews a representative of another government agency as a means of keeping the public informed of the activities of federal bureaus. Paul Walser, state coordinator for the Soil Conservation Service has appeared on the program several times.

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CONSERVATION PRACTICES ENABLE LOUISIANA FARMER TO CUT FEED COSTS

The establishment of a coordinated conservation farming system which utilized each farm acre according to its capabilities has enabled J. A. McDaniel of near Farmerville, La., to more than double his livestock program since 1936 without the purchase of any feed.

In 1936 Mr. McDaniel had only three hogs and three cows on his 80-acre farm--today he has five hogs and eight cows.

A proper rotation of crops, the use of winter and summer legumes, and contour cultivation and terraces to conserve moisture made possible the increased production of feed, he explained. The corn production has been increased from 12 to 18 bushels per acre since 1936. Mr. McDaniel said also that the utilization of idle land and the intensification of production on conservation treated acres in cultivation made it necessary for him to use five mules whereas he previously had only one mule and that his farm supplies the feed and hay needed to care for his four extra mules.

Strip crops of oats and peas planted in cultivated fields to control erosion have provided additional forage for all livestock. Five tons of oat hay were harvested from 8 acres of strips this year. The oats were followed by cowpeas which protected the land from erosion, enriched the soil and produced another feed crop.

Conservation farming also has brought about an increase in cotton production. Mr. McDaniel reported that he harvested 14 bales of cotton from 25 acres in 1936, 19 bales from 25 acres in 1937 and 16 bales from 16 acres last year.

He received the assistance of Service technicians and CCC enrollees from the camp at Farmerville in the establishment of erosion control and conservation farming practices on his land.

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REGION 4
Neil P. Anderson Building
Fort Worth, Texas
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